

Following Your Dream Is Possible

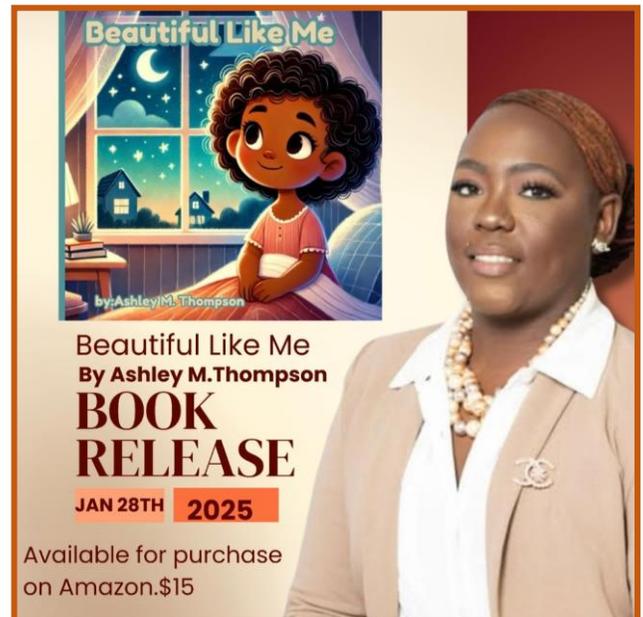
Do you have a dream? Are you having problems staying focused on your dream? As you grow you are able to create and implement a planned successful path to achieve your dream. Do you actively maintain a journal; do you think of taking small steps at a time. Remember, "Rome wasn't built in a day." The road to success can be endless if you apply yourself.

Will you encounter dilemmas? Will you feel defeated along the way? Yes! As you encounter dilemmas along the way, stay focused and grounded. However, you must plan purposefully to build a strong foundation toward a visible pathway to success. Don't give up, reassess your situation as needed, make changes and start again. Sometimes life's challenges interrupt and you must continue to believe that intercession and determination will help you achieve your outcome. Things to remember as you follow your aspired dream would include:

- reflecting and stating what that dream is;
- it must be something you believe – "believe it and you can achieve it";
- decide what that dream looks like - your vision; and
- share, plan and work to implement this dream.

Bamberg County First Steps was very excited to share some fantastic news and honor one of our prior parents for "Following Her Dream". Please join me in congratulating Ms. Ashley Thompson, on her newest accomplishment of becoming the author of her first published book, "Beautiful Like Me", which is being sold on Amazon.

We were fortunate to have her in our program from 2010 to 2012, under the care of her parent educator Ms. Erica Smith, now parenting supervisor. During her time in our program, she worked at a plant that was demanding all her time, leaving very little time for her family. Ms. Smith recalls Ashley mentioning wanting to do something different because she was tired of working all those demanding hours.



I know this journey may seem like a long time coming for Ashley, but she honed in and her trail of entrepreneurship went into effect. I remember when Ashley decided to step out on faith and leave the plant to focus more time on her son and his educational needs. She used her cosmetology skills for income, where she later expanded to opening her own shop. Her next step, she ventured into having a party rental business. In addition to releasing her book she also engages with the community by offering line dance classes promoting fun healthy movement.



On February 12, 2025, Ashley attended our monthly group connection, where she read her book to the children during story hour and signed books for all participating children in our PAT Program.

Looking forward, I know that Ashley will continue to be an inspiration to her community as she values and rewards hard work, dedication, and growth within her community. Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition! We look forward to witnessing her continued success and contributions in Bamberg County.

Yes, you can follow your dream. Your mindset most definitely will determine your outcome.